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Advocate of Peace.

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Will War Ever be Altogether Abolished?

People will answer this question according to their habits of thought. Some, looking only at the fact that there has always been war in the world, will answer it as we heard an intelligent, experienced man recently answer it: "You can't abolish war; people will fight till doomsday."

This seems to be the point of view of ex-Senator William E. Chandler. At a peace conference held in Washington on April 16, under the auspices of the Washington Branch of the Greenacre Fellowship Association, over which he presided, he expressed himself as very pessimistic though not altogether hopeless in regard to the elimination of war from the world. He asked the question, "Can war be made to cease, and peace reign everywhere and at all times be made to prevail against the causes which may press forward to embroil the nations in bloody strife?" He doubted whether this could be answered in the affirmative. He also asked a number of other questions similar to those usually propounded by those who believe that what has been always will be: Could American independence have been secured without war with Great Britain? Should the seceding Southern States have been allowed to go in peace? Should the firing on Fort Sumter have had no reply? Could the slaves have been freed within hundreds of years without war? Could the Cubans have been freed from Spanish rule without war? Ought Japan not to have resisted Russia's aggressions?

All these questions, so far as they have any bearing on the future, proceed on the false theory that human nature and human conduct and institutions never change, but are always inspired by the same motives and ideas. Even if it be true that these wars could not have been avoided, — some of them certainly might have been and all of them *ought* to have been, — men's beliefs and practices being what they then were, it does not at all follow that we shall have another series of events of the same kind. Nothing in the history of the race is better established than that human nature changes and improves, and that old causes of strife and war pass away.

If Mr. Chandler had judged the case from what has actually been accomplished in the direction of the diminution of war and the growth and expansion of peace, he would have reached a much less halting conclusion. Personal fighting and dueling have almost entirely disappeared throughout the civilized world. Private war has wholly passed away and civil war is practically a thing of the past. Religious wars are no more. Within the great nations over immense areas almost universal and perpetual peace reigns. The long periods of peace in the past century, during which war between nations has been on the whole the exception, have been unique in history. Not a single battle has been fought for the last thirty-five years in Western Europe, which a century before was the scene of perpetual warfare. England and France, which were once always at war, have not had a pass at arms with each other for more than three-quarters of a century. All the smaller states of Western Europe have long been living in peace with one another. Our own nation has had on the whole more than one hundred years of peace since the signing of the Constitution, and at least two of our wars with foreign countries are now universally judged to have been unnecessary, and one of them extremely wicked. During this period arbitration, practically unknown a hundred years ago, has been successfully applied in the settlement of more than two hundred international controversies. A

permanent international court of arbitration, undreamed of a century ago, has now become a reality. Excuse for war has therefore by the practical confession of the nations themselves ceased to exist. The most of this has been accomplished during the period of Senator Chandler's own public life. But he has evidently thought less about these accomplishments than about possible and easily framed excuses for the wars that have been.

It is, of course, not to be expected that the great historic beliefs and other causes of war will cease at once to operate. The Russo-Japanese war, though painful in the extreme, is no great surprise to those who know its antecedents. But these old beliefs and motives are rapidly being counteracted by new and better ones, — tenfold more rapidly perhaps to-day than at any former period. It is a most perverted view of history to infer from the sanguinary conflict now going on that men will never have more sense than they have at present, and that all future time is to be characterized by like bloody struggles, even at long intervals.

It is true, as Mr. Chandler said, that it is "through struggle and argument and controversy" that the world has so far moved upwards. It is probable also that these elements will play a large part in affairs for a long time to come. But there are other forms of struggle and controversy than the brutal and barbarous ones which result in killing and destruction, and it is these, and not war, which have been chiefly instrumental in producing the advancement of the past. The struggles of the race are rapidly now reaching higher forms, and the appeal to force is being discarded in all private affairs. The logical and inevitable outcome must be the relegation of brutal force to the background more and more in international affairs. Besides this, the great principles of coöperation and mutual service have come powerfully to the front in recent years, and there is every reason to believe that these will supplant in large degree the struggles and controversies hitherto so prevalent even where they were struggles of word and argument only. Men are to accomplish infinitely more by struggling together against natural obstacles than they have accomplished, if it can be called accomplishment, by struggling against one another.

From this point of view there is but one possible answer to Mr. Chandler's question. War will in the very necessities of the case cease, and peace finally reign everywhere. Self-interest alone and the demand for ordinary prosperity and comfort will accomplish this result, even if no higher motives are brought into play. The only question of any real importance now is, How rapidly can we hasten this process and drive out the bloody system which is already self-condemned, and which civilized men will banish from their relations one to another because it has become so burdensome, ruinous and monstrously irrational. "Universal peace," to quote the language of Emerson, "is as sure as is the prevalence of civilization over barbarism, of liberal governments over feudal forms."

The Coming Peace Congress at Lucerne.

The international arbitration and peace gatherings which are to occur this season give promise of being among the most notable which have ever been held. The movement has acquired such force that it now commands almost universal attention and sympathy. The great meetings of last year at Boston and St. Louis, conspicuously successful as they were, were not the last word on the subject. They only laid broader and deeper the foundations for much larger things hereafter.

Of the three great international peace meetings in Europe this year the first will be the twenty-second Conference of the International Law Association opening at Christiania on the 4th of September. We call this a peace conference, because the Association, though dealing with many phases of international law, really though only indirectly related to the peace cause, has always made arbitration one of the leading subjects of its deliberations. The Christiania Conference will be attended by a considerable number of the most eminent jurists and publicists of Europe and America, and will be marked with that sort of success which always attends any international meeting held under the auspices of the progressive government of Norway.

The Conference of the Interparliamentary Union, the second of these gatherings, will be held in Brussels not far from the time of the Christiania meeting of the International Law Association, perhaps afterwards, though possibly the last week in August. The council of the Union meets this month in Brussels, to decide upon the date of the meeting and to map out the program. The subjects that will be considered at the Conference will be the urgency of reduction of armaments, a general treaty of obligatory arbitration among the nations, and the establishment of an international congress to meet at stated periods for the discussion of international questions. This latter subject has suddenly come to the front in international thought as one of the utmost moment, and the Interparliamentary Conference will deal with it this year much more thoroughly than it did last September at St. Louis. The prospect now is that several of the South American parliaments will this year for the first time be represented in the Conference, and that will add greatly to the interest and significance of the occasion.

The third of these gatherings — to which we wish to call special attention — will be that of the Fourteenth International Peace Congress, which will open at Lucerne on the 19th of September in the Bloch